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CIA TIP TO IKE A DAY BEFORE SUEZ ATTACK

Not Caught Entirely
By Surprise

By Richard Wilson
(Register's Washington Correspondent)

WASHINGTON, D. C. — A

controversy is developing here on the Eisenhower administration's awareness of and readiness for international crises.

Was the United States caught unready and off-guard by the Middle East crisis in a less disastrous version of the Pearl Harbor surprise of 1941?

The answer thus far is that the central intelligence agency (CIA) did, in fact, advise the White House 24 hours in advance of the imminence of the Israeli, British and French assault on Egypt.

The government's top intelligence agency also advised the White House of the unrest in Hungary, but it was not able to forecast the course of events and the terrible repression imposed by Russia.

Not Satisfied

Congressional leaders have been informed of these advance intelligence estimates, but they are not completely satisfied.

Senator Mike Mansfield (Dem., Mont.), an influential member of the senate foreign relations committee, charges that the intelligence services were "delinquent" in not having advance information. He demands a joint congressional watch committee for the intelligence services.

Central intelligence agency is fighting such congressional supervision, but has welcomed a study of its work on the Egyptian and Hungarian crises by Senator Mansfield or other members of the foreign relations committee.

CIA will oppose being probed by staff members of any supervisory committee on the ground that this would interfere with its secret work.

Forecast on Egypt

The intelligence estimate on the action in Egypt did not name the time when the assault would begin, except that it would be in the near future. Thus, although President Eisenhower recently said that he had learned of the attack only through the press, intelligence reports were in the White House on the imminence of the attack.

It is said there is no discrepancy between these

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directly true that President Eisenhower had received no information from the British, French or Israelis on their intentions, and only got the definite news from the press.

This fits the previous picture of an administration which had been deliberately misled by the British and the French who, from Oct. 15 onward, kept their allies ignorant of their plans.

The point now made is that the central intelligence agency was, without British and French co-operation, able to determine somewhat in advance the action these countries and Israel were about to take.

New System

Submission of such estimates, which amount to exact evaluations and predictions, is a relatively new function for the central intelligence agency. These estimates have been going before the national security council for more than four years, and were first introduced by Walter Bedell Smith.

Prior to that time it had been the historic function of the various intelligence agencies of the government to inform the military services, the state department and the White House of developments, but not to evaluate these developments.

Under Allen Dulles, the CIA has advanced further in this direction than under Smith. What it amounts to is that Dulles and his top staff tie themselves to predictions of probable events.

In the present case, they were right in evaluating Israeli intention to attack in the Sinai desert rather than in Jordan; but it is not disclosed in what cases CIA has been wrong.

Can't Bare All

Nor is the agency itself in a position to reveal when it has been right or when wrong, for that would tend to disclose the nature of its operations. The central intelligence agency, nevertheless, has to take the responsibility inside the government for the accuracy or error of its evaluations.

It goes about the same distance in making these evaluations as have the joint chiefs of staff in making recommendations for military action.

The joint chiefs do not take overall responsibility. They submit evaluations of the need for and effect of possible military operations—but only from the military point of view.

Higher consideration of policy may overrule their military evaluations, and the joint chiefs of staff have, at least thus far, avoided seeking to override the higher policy.

End of Its Job

CIA also stops at this point. Once it has made its submissions to the president, the secretary of state and the national security council its work is done.

It can easily be that the president, or the national security council, or both, accept CIA evaluations with a grain of salt. It is also theoretically possible that CIA evaluations may not make the impression they deserve at the top level of government.

In the present case, it is considered doubtful that 24-hour notice would be sufficient to have altered the situation. But the question likely to be asked in congress is why we failed to learn of exact intentions of the British, French, and Israelis earlier and make some positive and direct

attempt to forestall the attack.

It, during the period beginning Oct. 15, when we began to have suspicions and the 24-hour advance flash by the CIA, any such attempt was made, the curtain has been drawn across this information.

The attack came in the closing days of the presidential campaign, and afforded Adlai E. Stevenson the opportunity to charge publicly that the president either misled the nation or was ignorant on the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Now that the presidential campaign has passed, a Democratic-controlled congress is expected to take a renewed interest in the question

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